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THE RED MAN'S PRESENT NEEDS.

BY HAMLIN GARLAND.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

In my wanderings over the Rocky Mountain States, I have happened upon some twelve or fifteen Indian reservations. This unofficial inspection, made for fictional purposes, I now wish to turn to practical account in aid of a clearer understanding of the present conditions of the nation's wards. I am not to be taken as the representative of any organization whatsoever, and I have never held, and never sought, and do not intend to seek, any position under the government. Perhaps this freedom from departmental bias may lend a certain value to my statement of what I saw and what I think should be done. A part of what follows is necessarily critical, but its main intent is constructive. I do not doubt the good intention of the Indian Department; on the contrary, I believe its head to be sincerely anxious to clear the service of its abuses. What is here written is intended to aid rather than embarrass the Commissioner in getting rid of his inheritance of foolish policies.

It is necessary at the start to clear away the common misapprehension that "one Indian is precisely like another." This is not true. On the contrary, there are very wide divergencies of habit among the native tribes now living in America. Red men living side by side are as widely separated in speech and in manner as the Turk and the German. There are, indeed, two or three distinct races of Americans included under the term "Indian," speaking many languages quite distinct and irrelatable.

The second point to be grasped is this: There are no Indians living as nomads or hunters to-day. If the reader will examine a map of the United States Indian Department, he will find, scattered all over the West, minute, irregular patches of yellow, ranging from a thumb-nail's breadth to that of a silver quarter. These are the "corrals," or open-air prisons, into which the original owners of the continent have been impounded by the white race. Most of these reservations are in the arid parts of

the great Rocky Mountain Plateau ; a few are in timbered regions of older States, like Wisconsin and Minnesota. Speaking generally, we may say these lands are relatively the most worthless to be found in the State or Territory whose boundaries enclose the red man's home, and were set aside for his use because he would cumber the earth less there than elsewhere. Furthermore, scarcely a single one of these minute spots is safe to the red people. Every acre of land is being scrutinized, and plans for securing even these miserable plots are being matured.

It will appear, even from a glance at this map, that to understand the "Indian problem," is to understand the climate, soil and surroundings of each one of fifty reservations, in a dozen States, hundreds, even thousands of miles apart, and to take into account the peculiarities of as many differing tribes of men. A rule which would apply perfectly to the Cheyennes of Oklahoma would not in the least apply to the Cheyennes of Montana, but might aid the Wichitas, Kiowas, or Fort Sill Apaches, not because the latter tribes are similar in habit, but because their soil, surroundings, and climate are practically the same.

The Sioux, Crows, Northern Cheyennes, Blackfeet, Gros Ventres, and Assiniboines, occupying respectively the Standing Rock reservation in Dakota, and the Crow, Tongue River, Fort Peck, Fort Belknap and Blackfeet reservations in Montana, are all in an arid climate and confronted with the problem of irrigation.

The Blackfeet, also a hunting race, have a land even less adapted to the raising of corn and wheat; for their reservation lies high on the eastern slope of the continental divide, and frosts blast both the growing and the ripening crop. They have, however, a good grass country and can be made self-supporting as herders. The Fort Peck reservation, in eastern Montana, on the upper Missouri, like the land at Standing Rock, Dakota, is upland prairie, with meagre streams and poor timber, a dry bleak land, fit only for stock-raising, except along the bottoms, where irrigation is possible.

The Crows are a little better off. They have abundant water from two beautiful streams, which take their rise in the Big Horn mountains; and they have put through some fairly successful irrigating ditches. They have also owned for several years herds of cattle; a cut in rations would not leave them helpless. The Northern Cheyennes, their neighbors, are in a rougher country,

a very arid country, with only a few feeble streams, but they have plenty of timber and good grazing lands. Their chief needs are cattle, and a fence to keep out the cattle-men.

The Sioux, the Blackfeet, and the Northern Cheyennes live practically the same life. They have small, badly-ventilated log or frame hovels of one or two rooms, into which they closely crowd during cold weather. In summer, they supplement these miserable shacks by canvas tepees and lodges, under which they do their cooking, and in which they sleep. Their home life has lost all its old-time picturesqueness, without acquiring even the comfort of the settler in a dug-out. Consumption is very common among them, because of their unsanitary housing during cold weather.

They dress in a sad mixture of good old buckskin garments and shoddy clothing, sold by the traders or issued by the government. They are, of course, miserably poor, with very little to do but sit and smoke and wait for ration day. To till the ground is practically useless, and their herds are too small to furnish them support. They are not allowed to leave the reservation to hunt or to seek work, and so they live like reconcentrados. Their ration, which the government by an easy shift now calls a charity, feeds them for a week or ten days, and they go hungry till the next ration day comes round. From three to seven days are taken up with going after rations. These words also apply to the Jicarilla Apaches, and to a part of the Southern Utes. Chief Charley's followers have lands along Pine River which they irrigate. On some of these reservations lands are allotted, either actually or nominally, though the people make less account of it than the agent reports.

The visitor among the Southern Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, and Fort Sill Apaches, will find conditions quite other than those of the North. The climate is mild and the land very productive. Corn, cotton, fruit of all kinds, and wheat can be grown. The winters are short, and water and timber fairly abundant. With the exception of the Yakima and Flathead reservations, those in Oklahoma are the only really habitable Indian lands I have visited. Manifestly, a regulation which would do good in Oklahoma might work incalculable harm in Dakota and Montana. To cut rations among the Southern Cheyennes would prove only a temporary hardship; but a cut in rations among the Blackfeet or

Sioux might result in actual starvation and death, or at least in slaughter of the small flocks of cattle which they have begun to cherish. These wide differences cannot be too often brought to departmental notice.

Upon close study, each tribe, whether Sioux, or Navajo, or Hopi, will be found to be divided, like a white village, into two parties, the radicals and the conservatives—those who are willing to change, to walk the white man's way; and those who are deeply, sullenly sceptical of all civilizing measures, clinging tenaciously to the traditions and the lore of their race. These men are often the strongest and bravest of their tribe, the most dignified and the most intellectual. They represent the spirit that will break but will not bow. And, broadly speaking, they are in the majority. Though in rags, their spirits are unbroken; from the point of view of their sympathizers, they are patriots.

There is much to admire in this unconquerable pride. I count it a virtue in that Northern chief who said: "I will not clean the spittoons of the white man's civilization." Hatred of tyranny is a distinctly American attribute, and one that deserves honorable consideration on the part of the department. Only those who are besotted with the wine of our cruel and uneasy civilization will condemn rankly and contemptuously the love of liberty, no matter whether in the heart of a brown man or of a red man. There should be some way to conserve and turn to account the lofty pride of the Sioux and the Cheyenne. When they lose their self-respect, they will sink to vagabondage and beggary; to break them is to destroy them. Science has come to our aid; we understand as never before the constitution of a red man's mind. The philosophy of evolution has broadened our conception of the universe, and in our dealings with primitive men religious bigotry and race hatred should no longer enter. The greedy man, on the one hand, and the fanatic, on the other, have too long confused the situation for the Indian.

The allotment of lands in severalty which began in land-lust and is being carried to the bitter end by those who believe a Stone Age man can be developed into a citizen of the United States in a single generation, is in violent antagonism to every wish and innate desire of the red man, and has failed of expected results, even among the Southern Cheyennes, where the land is rich and climate mild, because it presents a sombre phase of civilized life.

The attempt to make the Sioux a greedy land-owner, content to live the lonely life of the poor Western rancher, cut off from daily association with his fellows, is to me uselessly painful. If we would convert the primitive man to our ways, we must make our ways alluring.

We should not forget that the red man is a sociable animal, and that his life, so far from being silent and sombre, has always been full of song and rich in social interchange. All his duties—even his hunting—have always been performed in company with his fellows. He is a villager, never a solitary. He dreads solitude, and one of the old-time tribal punishments was to be thrust outside the camping circle. The life of every member of the tribe is open to comment. He confides every secret to his group of lodge-men. He shares his food, his tepee, with his fellows. It is this gregariousness of habit, this love of his kind, and this deep-seated dread of loneliness, which make the Sioux and the Cheyenne so reluctant to adopt the Dawes land theories. They cling to the lodge for the reason that it can be easily moved, and is cheap.

Naturally, those who were resolute to make the Indian a solitary took little thought of this deep-seated mental characteristic, being confident that resolute whacking would jar his brain-cells into conformity with those of a white man of the same age. With them the red hunter is not a man peculiar to his environment; he is merely a bad boy who obstinately goes wrong. That he loves running water, that he needs to be near wood for his fires, that he shrinks from the bleak, wind-swept prairies, are considerations of small account to them; but a man with many years experience among the Cheyennes said to me: "It is hard to make progress under the present system."

In the desire to make better Indians, and to make the transition from their old life to the new as easy as may be, to lessen rather than to add to the weight of their suffering, I offer the following suggestions:

First. Group the families of each tribe on the water courses of its reservation, in little settlements of four or five families, with their lands outlying, instead of forcibly scattering them over the bleak and barren uplands. The Standing Rock Sioux, Northern Cheyennes, and Assiniboinés of Forts Peck and Belknap, could all be so colonized, and water drawn in from the streams upon

their gardens,* while their cattle range in common. Why should not the Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes, already on allotments along the streams, be allowed to draw together in villages if they please? The Northern Cheyennes, now in full possession of their streams, should retain these water rights in common. Individual occupancy of lots and individual ownership of products is all that is necessary to their colonization on the arable and irrigable land. Cattle of gentle breed should be given to them as the beginning of individual herds. The red man's feeling that the earth is for the use of all men, is right; he has always distinguished between the ownership of things and the ownership of land and water. It is possible to refine him without teaching him to be either greedy or stingy, just as we can emphasize the return to individual labor without forcing him to live as if in solitary confinement. I confess I have no sympathy with those who would make the red man suffer needlessly to fit their notion of discipline. As a boy, I hated the solitary labor of the Western farm, and I would not condemn even a convict to such life as is involved in a lonely cabin on the plains.

Second. Each reservation should be divided into districts, not too large, and a really competent man employed to personally teach the red men how to plow, sow, and reap. This essential part of the service is sadly inefficient. The "farmers" of the various agencies I have visited, are either ignorant or slothful, or they are so burdened with duties around the agency corrals, that they are hardly ever of marked use to the red men. The present working of the Civil Service has led to a vicious habit of "transferring" a bad or weak man from post to post. Furthermore, the employees in many cases are hold-overs, men who sought the service as a refuge and who remain in it because they are unfitted for other life. I am willing to admit, however, in justice to the department, that the pay is too small to secure the services of a really capable man, unless he assumes double duty, as among the Southern Cheyennes, where the farmers serve as sub-agents, or school superintendents, and have little time to give to field work.

* The farmer at Poplar Creek two years ago showed me a garden of nearly one hundred acres which he had set aside in lots to some sixty or eighty men; and, though the season's water had been very meagre, he had been able to supply these families, through their own labor, with potatoes for the winter. He did more. He demonstrated that these people, with water for their lands, could be self-supporting in three years by means of a ditch costing not more than \$50,000.

Part of the useless travel in this work of superintending would be removed by settlement in groups as above outlined, but an increase in the number of industrial teachers must be given before adequate instruction can be assured. The government would save money in the end.

Life at most of the Indian agencies is not a joyous thing to contemplate. The buildings are bare, bleak barracks. The boarding-houses are vile, and amusements are few. It is not wonderful that refined natures shudder and flee at first glance. Only the chain of necessity keeps the average employee to his post. The Indian soon becomes a burden, a nuisance. Duties are mechanically performed, and each man permits his hand to fall short rather than to over-reach his exact duty. The effect of such service is not precisely inspiring to the Indian. The only ways to change this service are these—raise the standard of wages and make life pleasanter for those who isolate themselves to teach.

Third. A vigorous, wholesome woman is needed in each district as matron. She ought not to be the wife of the farmer; her first duty should be the welfare of her wards, and she should have a genuine sympathy for them. As I go among the red people, the lack of a matron of this character seems the most crying omission of all. I have never seen this work properly done. It is, indeed, a sort of higher education. The women need to be taught by example how to cook and sew, how to keep house, how to bridge the chasm between the tepee fire and the cook-stove. The red people are like children in all these things; they cannot go beyond their teacher; they can only follow. If their "farmer" is ignorant and a loafer, and their matron slothful and ill-humored, they are involved in these vices. They are like children, also, in that each effort is quite sincere, though fitful. They are easily discouraged. They can reason, they do reason, and they want to do the right thing; but the mental habits fixed by thousands of years of a simpler life are hard to overcome. The man or woman called to teach them should be patient and a leader. It is not true to say that this work is being done in the schools. Working in "relays" in the laundry or kitchen of a boarding-house is quite different from taking care of a home after marriage. The field matron is needed to supplement the instruction in the schools.

Fourth. Wherever a tribe has a peculiar natural appetite for an art—as canoe-building, weaving, basket-making, or pottery—

baking—the department should send among them a teacher capable of rescuing perishing forms and symbols, and able also to develop new forms built upon the old. The Jicarilla Apaches, for example, are fine basket-makers. This art, in place of being ignored or positively discouraged, as at present, should be at once seized as a means of benefiting the tribe. The growth of grass, willows or other material necessary for it should be cultivated and a market opened on just terms. *The value of such an art in maintaining the self-respect of a tribe cannot be over-estimated.* The Rev. W. C. Roe, a missionary at Seger's Colony, Oklahoma, is of the sort I can commend. He is employing this month seventy men and women making bead-work, tepees, bows and arrows, moccasins, and ornamental pouches—and what he has done can be duplicated by the agents and missionaries of other tribes. The Navajo blankets and silver-ware, the Hopi and Tewan pottery, the Chippewa canoes, are all in demand, and the art of making them should be fostered. Life on most of the reservations is a grim contention against wind and sun and bare brown earth. Each condition should be minutely studied, and every favoring law seized upon. Whenever an industry can be developed along inherited aptitudes, it should be done.

John Seger, who has been for many years a friend and teacher among the Arapahoes and Southern Cheyennes, pleads for an Old Folks' Home near his school, where the old people could spend the rest of their lives in peace near their grandchildren. They will not last long, but we cannot afford to let them suffer. Under Seger's plan a great part of their food would be raised in a garden, and they could be employed to teach their native arts to the young people. The licensed trader is a survival of the old rule and should be abolished. His monopoly is intolerable. Under the single restriction that no liquor should be sold, competing stores should be welcomed on each reservation, in order that the red man may sell his product to better advantage, as well as supply his needs at the lowest possible cost.

Fifth. Schools should be established in each "farm district," which should be at once boarding and industrial schools, like those at Colony and Red Moon, Oklahoma, and these schools should displace all sectarian and non-reservation schools whatsoever, and all forcible transportation of pupils to Eastern schools should instantly cease. The theory that to civilize the red man it is

necessary to disrupt families and to smother natural emotions by teaching the child to abhor his parents, is so monstrous and so unchristian that its failure was foretold by every teacher who understood the law of heredity. The school should raise the parents with the child. Instruction should be most elementary, as it is at Seger, at Darlington, and at Red Moon, among the Southern Cheyennes. In these schools, the child is taught to grapple with the conditions of life on his own reservation. He is taught how to mend a harness and put it on a horse, not how to make a wagon; how to plant potatoes, not how to conjugate a Latin verb. After he has acquired the power to read and write and speak colloquially (which the Carlisle Indians I have met seldom do), he is taught the value of money, and sufficient arithmetic to enable him to transact the business of a herder or farmer. But admirable as this is, there are other possibilities. Wherever white and red are mingled as settlers, I would educate them in the little red school-house together, and this can soon be done in some parts of Oklahoma. In any case, the education should arm the child for his battle for life and should not alienate him from his people. "Honor thy father and thy mother," is a command which the red children implicitly obey, until they are taught that everything their poor old parents do is vile.

Sixth. The missionaries in the field should be given to understand that they have no more rights in the premises than any other visitor, and that their attempt to regulate the amusements and the daily life of the red man is without sanction of federal authority. Many of the missionaries I have met are devoted souls, but I would not care to live where they had power to define what recreations were proper and what were not. Their view of "profane" songs and pleasures is absurdly narrow and (to put it mildly) inelastic. They do not represent the culture and scholarship of our day; and while I appreciate their motives and their sacrifices, I cannot but observe that they are often an embarrassment to the agent and sad examples of narrow piety. In the interest of their own influence, I would urge all Eastern Missionary Societies to at once impress upon their representatives on the reservations the wisdom of assisting in the preservation and development of the native arts of the tribe with which they are associated. This they can do with very little money, by inducing all the old men and women (who are the fast fading representatives of

these arts) to instruct their sons and daughters, nieces or grandchildren, in silver-smithing, basket-making, blanket-weaving, or whatever form of work they know best. The parent society could also form itself into an agency for the sale of wares, being careful to keep the advice of accredited authorities on art in order that the product may not lose vogue by becoming cheap and characterless. Mr. and Mrs. Roe, of Seger's Colony, Oklahoma, are examples of missionaries with larger aims than merely making converts. Mr. Roe's influence is not due to his preaching of dogma, but to his kindness and helpfulness as a man and brother.

This industrial side of the Indian problem fits in just now with the revival of handicraft so strikingly general throughout the nation, and it may be that in it lies a very considerable means of aiding the red man, as he painfully crosses the gulf between his old warrior life and his life as a cattle-herder and gardener. He cannot be cut off from all his past; progress is not of that nature; it proceeds by slow displacement, by gradual accretion. Above all, the red man must feel that he is worth while, that he is a man among men—different, but not despicable because different. We should try to make him an admirable red man, as Booker Washington is trying to make the negro an admirable black man.

Seventh. Wherever a red man takes his allotment, he should be considered a citizen, free to come and go as he pleases, subject to the same general laws as his white neighbor. He should be allowed to visit other reservations and inter-marry with other tribes; he will never inter-marry to any extent with the whites; he ought not to do so if he could. Under this new condition, the agent will no longer be the commander, but the friend, the adviser, the attorney; his authority will depend on his judgment, his tact, his helpfulness.

The present condition of the allottee is an anomalous one; he is neither man, brute, nor neighbor. He is told by the Commissioner that he is free to do as other men; but when he seeks to leave the reservation he is ordered back by the agent. He is forbidden to visit in numbers exceeding five or ten; he is ordered not to dance, and admonished to wear his hair short. He is told that he must not use paint on his face, and a hundred other useless indignities and restrictions are put upon him;* and, if he pro-

* The general effect of the legislation suggested by those who would convert the man of the Stone Age into a "Christian citizen" is something like this:

tests, he is told that so long as he eats the rations of the government he must obey the agent; and yet these rations are not only his necessity, they are his due. I have sometimes felt that the red man is the most patient and long-suffering creature in the world. Those who cry out against "pauperizing" him by means of rations have little comprehension of the barren lands he inhabits, and the necessity and the justice of his allowance.

The allottee should be made a citizen in truth, subject to punishment when he goes wrong, free to dress as he pleases and live as he pleases, so far as forceful change is concerned. He should be encouraged to live better, to dress in keeping with his fortunes. Religious bias should no longer control him. His rights as a man should be respected. I have no sympathy with those who would "break" the head man and discredit every native amusement, turning the tribe into a settlement of joyless hypocrites. The zealots who preach this are themselves losing power in the world. What sort of village would that be where sombre fanatics could regulate the amusements and the education of the citizens? A people must have play; and, until the young red men and women come naturally to enjoy baseball and the Virginia reel, the government is in cruel business when attempting to force relinquishment of native songs, games and dances.

Finally. The question of abolition of reservations comes up, and is advocated by those who would teach the red man to farm, as you teach a puppy to swim by flinging it into the river. "Let them sink, or paddle and keep afloat," they say, but to let down the bars on some of the reservations would be to submerge the

"You, Whiteshield, will at once leave your pleasant camp in the grove beside the Washita and take yourself to your homequarter. You will at once give up the tepee and all your skin clothing. You will put off your moccasins and take to brogans. You will build a hut and live therein. You will have your hair cut short, and give up painting your face. You will cease all singing and dancing. Every form and symbol of the past is vile—put them away. You will send your children to school—even the little ones of five must go. Smoking is expensive, and leads to dreaming—stop it. To do bead-work or basket-weaving is heathen; your wife must abandon that. You will instantly begin to raise pigs and chickens, and work hard every day, because it is good to work. In order that you may know how sweet it is to live the life of the white farmer, you may go to church on Sunday and hear a man talk in words which you do not understand, and sing songs which white people sing when they have nothing better to do." This reads like caricature, but I assure the reader it is only a condensation of the suggestions made in my hearing by kindly people who believed themselves to be Christians.

tribe utterly and render it homeless. The reservation is still an "isle of safety" to the Northwest tribes.

Moreover, we must never forget that what is true of one reservation is not true of another. In Oklahoma, the settlers and the Cheyennes and Arapahoes are about to mingle peaceably, for the reason that "the horseman with a gun," the cattle-man, is passing away, and the peace-loving farmer is taking his place. "I do not fear the man in the fields with his plow," said a Cheyenne to me; "but the man on the horse who rides and shoots, him I fear." In this remark is much enlightenment. Wherever the lands are generally arable, and the settlers are bent above plows and spades, where peaceful homes are being established and district schools built, there the lines of the reservation can safely give way. But to let the predatory cattle-men in on the reservation of the Northwest is to open the gate to trouble and corruption. The Cheyenne range should be fenced rather than leased or laid open to outside stock.

The cow-boy is a picturesque citizen, but he does not make for sweetness and light. He is not as lawless as he once was, but he is not even now an inspiration to a race struggling to acquire sobriety and thrift. Nevertheless, he has been for forty years the chief exemplar of the white man's civilization—so far as the red men were aware. Our agents have been mainly unmarried men, living as in a barrack, offering little in way of domesticity to the eyes of the tribes they ruled. They were not all corrupt, but they were sojourners; they made no homes among the Indians. The female teachers and most missionaries are also solitaries, with repellent notions of man's duty to God and their own duties to the redskin. Speaking generally, it is safe to say that the red men and the red women have had very slender opportunity to learn of the ways in which the industrious, peaceful, kindly American farmer and his family live. The Ute, the Cheyenne and the Crow came in contact only with the ragged, filthy fringe of our civilization.

But the cow-boy, the "scout," the lawless trapper, the "lone-some men," are passing away. As a novelist, I am sorry to see them go; as a well-wisher of the red men, and as a believer in decent speech, sobriety and kindly living, I am glad of the cow-boy's diminishing hoof-beats. He carries with him something fine, but his room is better than his presence when all is said and done.

The ranchers of Oklahoma to-day are farmers, as they should be, paying for their grass and building homes for their wives and children—men who realize that protection lies in law, not in violence; they will make it a point to dwell in peace with their red neighbors.

Therefore, I would abolish the reservation line in Oklahoma, but I would retain it for the present in Montana. Instead of trying to "break the power of the chiefs," I would use them to influence others less able. The agent can do much to discredit a head man, but he cannot rob him of any genuine influence he may have, for among the red men of a reservation, as among white people in a community, there are those who are natural leaders, who are orators, with the power to convince and lead.

There are not wanting those who say cynically: "Why take all this trouble? There are only a couple of hundred thousand of the redskins; let 'em die!" To such words we reply: As a nation, we can't afford to rest under the stigma of inhuman cruelty. These red men are on our conscience and cannot by any easy shift be put away. They are survivals in our midst of the Stone Age; they are not to blame for their inelasticity of habit; moreover, they have many admirable qualities. We are answerable for them, just as we are answerable for the black man's future. As the dominant race, we have dispossessed them; we have pushed them to the last ditch—which will be their grave, unless we lay aside greed and religious prejudice and go to them as men and brothers, and help them to understand themselves and their problems; and only when we give our best to these red brethren of ours, do we justify ourselves as the dominant race of the Western continent.

HAMLIN GARLAND.